

Echo of Mary Queen of Peace

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Message of September 25, 2009

“Dear children, with joy, persistently work on your conversion. Offer all your joys and sorrows to my Immaculate Heart that I may lead you all to my most beloved Son, so that you may find joy in His Heart. I am with you to instruct you and to lead you towards eternity. Thank you for having responded to my call.”

Working on our own conversion

The conversion that Mary invites us towards (this is the fifth appeal in these last eight messages) is necessary for our lives. It is essential to prevent them from becoming flattened by the physical or biological dimension but rather, it must elevate them to the eternity towards which God called them. To avoid any misunderstanding, it may be a good idea to reiterate the fact that our terrestrial existence is not only something that prepares us for eternal life, which is understood to mean life after death; eternal life begins in this world, it is life in the Holy Spirit, life lived in the Grace of God. This awareness must illuminate and direct our actions, our choices, our relations, our plans, everything that we think, that we do, that we plan, that we fear, that we hope...

Day after day, we must walk with God, breathe in his Holy Spirit, so that progressively, but with continuous and unstoppable progression, Jesus might live in us. This is living the conversion that Mary calls us towards. It is not an easy journey, it is not a choice made once and for all, but a practice that is expressed in all circumstances, and that requires humility, vigilance, determination and above all, faithful abandonment to the Father's Will. **Dear children, insistently and joyously work on your conversion.** This is how Mary exhorts us and it is an invitation that is more accurate and anxious than ever. We are attentive towards the work that assures our material subsistence, but we are not so quick to recognise the importance of the work that Mary invites us to engage in; yet it is this work that builds our eternity; all other work has a much more limited aim, although it is important or necessary. Therefore, **we must work on our conversion**, but not only this, we need to **work insistently**, that is, assiduously, with determination, with commitment and again, this is not enough, Mary also asks us to **work joyously**. This is not an exorbitant request, actually, it underlines the characteristic of everything that we do out of pure love. It is true joy, pure joy, because in this case we not only savour human love, but actually, God's Love! And our conversion is rooted and grows in this experience.



“God's eternal today descended to the transitory today of the world and it drags our transitory today into God's perennial today. God is so great that he can make himself small. God is so powerful that he can make himself helpless and come towards us like a defenceless child, so that we might love him. God is so good that he renounces his divine splendour and descends into the stable, so that we might find him and so that his goodness might also touch us, be communicated to us and continue to operate through us. This is Christmas”.

Benedict XVI

Mary is with us on this journey: **I am with you to teach you and to guide you towards eternity.** What else do we expect? Let it not happen to us that *we did not know the time of our visitation* (cfr Luke 19, 41-44)! Mary not only recalls us but she also suggests a concrete pathway, to work towards our conversion: **Offer all your joys and your sadness to my Immaculate heart.** We offer Mary whatever She asks us and let it be an offering of love, a gift from loving children and along with this, all the things that press on our hearts, so that every part of us might be purified by her state of being Immaculate and in this way, **that she might guide all of us to her chosen Son, so that we might find joy in his heart.** In Jesus we can come to know joy, true joy, not transient joy, because it resides in communion with Jesus and it cannot be corroded by the circumstances of life. This is the joy that also accompanies us through difficulties and in times of sadness, that allows us to announce God's Love even in the darkest night!

Nuccio Quattrocchi

Message of October 25, 2009

“Dear children! Also today I bring you my blessing, I bless you all and I call you to grow on this way, which God has begun through me for your salvation. Pray, fast and joyfully witness your faith, little children, and may your heart always be filled with prayer. Thank you for having responded to my call.”

The pathway that God has commenced

This is a message that should be listened to and meditated on like all others, but that should be kept in your hearts with particular care because it carries a seed that would appear to promise a bloom that is finally near: the conclusion of **the pathway that God commenced through Mary.**

As always, but this time I feel the duty to declare it openly, I turn to Mary's intercession to ensure that my words are not a source of disturbance to hers.

Dear children, once again today I bring you my blessing and I bless all of you and invite you to grow on this pathway that God commenced through Me for your salvation. First of all we have her blessing. It is a great gift that should not be underestimated in the least. Her blessing allows the journey to begin for those who have not yet set out, it allows those who are already on the road to proceed, and for those who are already near their destination, it allows them to run; in fact, her blessing is **for everyone** and we all need it. Because this is a road that does not remain outside of us, but that is part of us, of our person and our nature, which is truer, divine and not terrestrial and eternal.

We need to **grow**, like God's children, we need to **grow** as God's children. And who better than Mary can be our Mother? **I invite you to grow on this road that God started through Me for your salvation.** This road that was commenced by God through Her, this road that is Mary, is the road through which God came to the world, he was born in Man, it is the road through which the world will find salvation. “The salvation of the world commenced through Mary, again, through Mary it must be fulfilled” (Saint Louis Marie Grignon de Montfort: *A treatise on true devotion to Mary*, thesis 49). This road is the same one that passes through Lourdes, Fatima, Medjugorje and many other places scattered throughout the world, which are more or less well-known, officially recognised or not, but always saving when visited by Her.

Already in the messages of the 25th of August and the 25th of September of the year 1991, Mary refers to Fatima, declaring, in the first one, that in Medjugorje she wants to fulfil what she commenced in Fatima and in the

“Africa, be brave, get up and walk!”

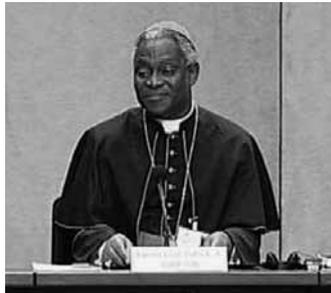
second one, asking for help in the triumph of Her Immaculate Heart. **This road, that God commenced**, will be brought to fulfilment by Him; Christ will return, according to Scripture, and *God Himself will be with them and be their God. And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes; there shall be no more death, nor sorrow, nor crying. There shall be no more pain, for the former things have passed away.*” (cfr. **Ap 21, 3-4**)

Pray, fast and joyfully bear witness with your faith, children, and your hearts will always be filled with prayer. From the first days of her presence in Medjugorje, Mary invited us to pray and fast, but many of us neglect to engage in such activities or we reduce them to an external tribute that does not involve the heart. Let us ensure that we do not reduce prayer to a verbal expression that is born on the lips and stops there, let us make it into a gesture of the heart that is perhaps expressed without words but with wailings of love. **May our hearts always be filled with prayer**, that the words articulated on our lips might have wings. N.Q.

Giving a voice to Africa

“Dear friends,

I am writing to you from Rome, where I’m participating in the bishops’ synod on Africa. It’s late in the evening. When I got up this morning, in a hotel room near St. Peter’s, for a moment I felt that I was out of place. “On a day like this, I should be at home, on my mission, in Lira, in Africa!, I instinctively thought. But then I immediately became aware of the fact that it was Africa that brought me to Rome. Along with other bishops, I was in fact chosen by the bishop’s conference to represent Uganda at the second special assembly of the synod of bishops for Africa”.



This is what was written by Father Giuseppe Franzelli, the bishop of Lira (Uganda), who was present as he himself recounts, at the special Assembly for Africa: an occasion of grace to immerse ourselves amidst the folds and the *wounds* of the African continent as Father Giuseppe tells us: “it is still affected by various armed conflicts but even more so by poverty, adverse climatic conditions, environmental degradation, corruption, exploitation of its natural resources by foreign multinationals, with the complicity of local governments, extensive social injustice, illnesses such as malaria, tuberculosis and obviously AIDS recurrent droughts and consequent famines which are actually the cause of further divisions, injustice and new conflicts.

And so here I am in Rome, **from the 4th to the 25th of October, with over 240 bishops who have joined the Pope** to engage in an intense exchange of experiences, discussions, prayer and discernment in an attempt to identify pathways and concrete means by which to build peace, to re-establish justice and to reconcile a continent that has been wounded by too many divisions. For this reason, despite being far from my people, I am happy to be here, in a moment when the universal Church is putting Africa at the centre of its attention”.

These words marked the end of the long **Message** addressed to everyone, in which the bishops summed up the fruit of their reflections and their plans to be implemented in the dioceses from now on. We’ve included some particularly suggestive extracts from it so as to be participants in the fate of this extraordinary land, which, who knows why, has been destined for centuries to bear very heavy crosses.

We are living in a world that is full of contradictions and that is experiencing a terrible crisis. Science and technology are taking enormous steps in all aspects of life, providing humanity with everything that it needs to make our planet a marvellous place for all of us. Nevertheless, the tragic situations of refugees, extreme poverty, illnesses and hunger are still killing thousands of people every day.

In all of this, Africa is the hardest hit. It is rich with human and natural resources, but a large portion of our population is left to fend for itself in poverty and misery, in war and conflicts, amidst crises and chaos. Very rarely is all of this caused by natural disasters. But rather, it is mostly due to human actions and the decisions of people who have no consideration for the common good. This is often due to tragic complicity and criminal conspiracy amidst the locals who are responsible, as well as foreign interests.

But Africa must not lose hope. God’s blessings are still abundant and they are waiting to be taken advantage of with prudence and justice, in favour of his children.... There is lots of good news in different parts of Africa. But the means of modern communication often prefer bad news and they seem to concentrate on our disgraces and faults, rather than on the positive efforts that we are making. Nations have come out of long years of war and they are gradually moving on the pathways of peace and prosperity. ... We would indistinctly invite everyone to collaborate in order to welcome the challenges of Reconciliation, Justice and Peace in Africa. Many people are suffering and dying: there’s no time to waste.

We would invite everyone to reconcile with God. This is what opens up the pathway of true reconciliation between people. This is what can break the vicious circle of offence, revenge and counterattacks. In all of this, the virtue of forgiveness is crucial, even before any admission of guilt. Those who say that forgiveness does not work, should try to act out revenge and see what happens. True forgiveness promotes the justice of repentance and reparation, which lead to a peace that goes beyond the roots of the conflict that make those who were victims and enemies, friends, brothers and sisters. Because it is God who makes this type of reconciliation possible.

Many sons and daughters of Africa have left their homes to seek a life in other continents. Many of them are happy and are making a valid contribution to the life of their new country of residence. Others are struggling to survive. We would recommend to all of them to pay adequate pastoral attention to the Church, God’s Family, wherever they are. “*I was a stranger and you took me in*” (Mt 25, 35) is not only a parable about the end of the world, but also a duty to be fulfilled today.

Africa is in need of holy politicians to clear this continent of corruption, who might work for the good of the people and know how to bring together other men and women of good will outside of the Church to unite against the common evils that assail our nations.

God’s family extends beyond the visible confines of the Church, it includes the whole of humanity. When we think of themes such as reconciliation, justice and peace, we all meet on a deeper level of our common humanity. This project involves everyone and requires common action. Let us raise our voices then for an appeal to all men and women of good will. In a particular way we are addressing those with whom we profess the same faith in Jesus Christ, and also men and women of other faiths.

The multinationals must stop the criminal devastation of the environment for their greedy exploitation of natural resources. The incitement of wars to obtain quick profits from chaos is a shortsighted policy, the price of which is human lives and blood. Is it possible that nobody is able to or wants to interrupt these crimes against humanity?

Africa is not impotent. Our destiny is still in our hands. All it asks is space in which to breathe and to prosper. Africa is already up and running and the Church is moving with it, offering it the light of the Gospel. The waters may be stormy, but with our gaze fixed on Christ the Lord (cfr. Mt 14, 28-32) we will certainly arrive at the port of reconciliation, justice and peace. **Africa, rise, take up your bed and walk!** (John 5, 8).

Red.

In SUDAN terrible massacres of Christians

The Synod for Africa dedicated special attention to Sudan, a country divided between the mostly Arab north, which has imposed the law of the Koran, and the south, which is Christian, and animist. Attacks on Christians are on the rise, reports Monsignor Kussala, a bishop from the country: “On the 13th of August last, the rebels entered the church of my parish and took many hostages. They killed seven of them as they were escaping into the forest: they crucified them on the trees”.

Living the Gospel is a difficult choice in Sudan, you run the risk of martyrdom: “We live in this sense, because they are killing people, they are burning their homes, their churches: this is martyrdom”. Christians are living in fear. “But we do not want to die: all of this strengthens people’s faith, people continue to come to church”.

Source: ZENIT

IN THE YEAR DEDICATED TO THE PRIESTHOOD

In the last place

by Antonio Gacioppo

In the year consecrated to the priesthood, the Church proposes different models of priestly life to its children. Each of these opens up a glimmer of light over what is the only priesthood: that of Christ, which each baptised person participates in, although in a different way.

With his simple life, *the little universal brother Charles de Foucauld* can help us to grasp some elements that are necessary in order to experience a holy and immaculate priesthood and thus answer the Spirit's voice and the needs of the Church. A little allusion to Frère Charles' priestly journey will enable us to understand what counts in his priesthood: **living Christ's life, imitating him in everything.**



like Charles de Foucauld. The grace of this year must introduce us to the mystery of Christ the most high priest, who helps us to celebrate our holy and spiritual faith with him, which is pleasing to God (cf. Rm 12). Every Christian is marked by priestly unction so that he might

stand before God the Father, offering him his life so as to become a channel of his merciful love towards every reality.

Every turning point is a conversion, a return to the essential, and with his experience, Charles de Foucauld teaches us to retrieve some very important parts of spiritual life without which we would risk living a life of faith flattened by devotionalism and not centred on the power of the Risen Christ.

Victim with Jesus

The first thing that urges Charles de Foucauld to think about the priesthood is the Eucharist, he however does not see himself as a multiplier of rites, but as he says: *offering Jesus to the Father on the altar for his glory and the salvation of men in the holy Eucharist, like he offered himself at the supper*; also means that the priests *must offer themselves with Jesus on the cross, suffering, with Jesus, the agony, the passion and the death in the measure that Jesus wants to call them to share his cup and to be victims with him*. Everything can be summed up by saying that also on the altar, the priest must take the last place, that is, that of the crucifix, the sacrificial lamb, giving himself for the flock that God entrusted to him.

Charles de Foucauld refuses the first place – that many seek out of pure human ambition or because it is a place of command, to direct the faithful according to your own way of seeing things – because he perceives that priestly power that is given to him from the Spirit of God is for the service of the *poor of Jahvé*, who need the priest to offer himself as well as the Easter victim, to open up the pathway not with words but with the power of the sacrifice of Christ working within them.

The grain that does not rot

Another thing that Brother Charles understands well is that *the priesthood requires an absolute donation to Jesus: martyrdom*. The true martyr is he who gives his life lovingly and the priesthood cannot be detached from this reality, otherwise we become detached from the *Victim*.

Before being killed, brother Charles intended to write to a cousin of his, with whom he had a very close relationship; in the letter he made reference to the extract from the Gospel in which there is talk of the grain of wheat. "Unless a grain of wheat falls into the ground and dies, it remains alone" (John 12,24). Being in the last place means living the dynamics of the grain

of wheat; if the priest does not experience this dynamic of transformation, he risks rotting rather than growing in the great gift that God entrusted to him.

God does not want super men, and brother Charles was not a super man, he wants men who know their place. This place is the fullness and harmony of the whole being in its totality; and so, blessed is the man who knows how to seek God's will in everything, who knows how to flee all falsity, hypocrisy, pride, arrogance, all things that cause the grain of wheat to rot. Brother Charles would say: blessed is he who knows how to choose the last place, because God dwells in him and whoever finds Him finds everything.

All men are of God

Lastly, the good Charles understands that *the priesthood requires universal charity*, unconditional consecration to all men. In his need to imitate Christ, he opens himself up to the Muslims and in particular to the tribe of Tuareg, so that they might be *summed up in Christ*, and he does this with an example, silence, joy, availability, trust, in total simplicity he announced the gospel through virtues. Words were not important, but that the Word might live in him.

If God invites us through the Church to reflect on the priesthood, it is because he wants to reawaken his priestly people (be it ministerial or regal); he wants to free it from the spirit of the world, to give it his Spirit; he wants to open it up to universal charity, intended as service to the whole of creation scattered through the universe. May God, who is the Father, help us to recognise and live this time of grace, and may his saints along with the Blessed Virgin Mary intercede for each of us, so that each of us might utter our "yes" to God and to his works.

The laypeople who are "jointly responsible" with the clergy

During a Conference in Rome some time ago, Benedict XVI offered a new look at the lay people in the Church. Recalling the fruits of the Second Vatican Council in his intervention, the Pope highlighted the constant tendency to identify the Church with the hierarchy.

In particular, the Pope identified the danger of a purely sociological vision of the notion of God's People, observing that the Council did not intend to provoke a fracture, another Church, "but a veritable renewal, in the continuity of the only subject which is the Church, which grows over time and develops, remaining always identical, the only subject of God's People on a pilgrimage".

"This requires a change of mentality regarding lay people in particular – the Holy Father underlined – going from considering them "collaborators" of the clergy to recognising them as truly "jointly responsible for the being and for the action of the Church, favouring the consolidation of a mature and committed laity".

Red.

At the hour of our death

by Stefania Consoli

Hail Mary! I salute you, full of every grace and I pray to you: remember me, especially at the hour in which I will leave my body...

We all repeat this, perhaps with a little distraction, almost without listening to the words that we ourselves repeat. But the Virgin on the other hand is attentive, and each time that we recite the *Hail Mary*, she listens to our fear: *do not leave us alone when we can no longer hold our breath, when the unknown takes the place of a dear and well-known existence...*

But if that moment seems to be far away (by his nature, man removes the idea of death), there are many deaths that we must deal with on a daily basis, more or less consciously. We need to realise this.

Is the fact that we benevolently accept situations that we are advertent to not perhaps a death? Is it not a death leaving people we love, safe places, and old habits, to follow those sudden swerves that life often puts in our way? And when we would like to shout out our reasons before what we believe to be unjust and rather, we choose to put disdain aside to make space for forgiveness? Death is also when we feel defeated, disappointed, abandoned...

My mother, stay with me during those



moments. Without your help, I feel lost. What was going well before is suddenly no longer right, and I am not...

When faced with the death that threatens us in various aspects, we instinctively defend ourselves: we are created for life, not for destruction! For this reason, rebellion comes about in all of our limbs. But it is annulment that God chose as the main pathway; foolishness for the human mind, and nevertheless, utmost knowledge as it is the prelude of a risen life. In a surprising way, Christ changed the sign of death: removing its characteristic of being definitive, he made it a simple *passage*. But

it is so terrible sometimes to experience it, and what a sense of loss, what a struggle that is unleashed in our whole being! It becomes a real tragedy for living man...

For this reason we invoke Mary, our mother, our sister, our friend who already inhabits eternity with her

immaculate body. She will remain alongside us to teach us abandonment to God, like in that *hour* experienced by her Son on the cross. She will tell us how to wait trustingly and calmly, like in those moments when she herself *died* to her own will so as to fulfil divine will.

The new creature that asks to be born in us needs these continuous deaths, which are necessary in order to purify the old and prepare the space for what will no longer be subject to corruption. We must only believe it.

Pray for us, then, Mary! *Now....because it seems like a time of death. Remain with me, I am afraid...Let me pass through your heart:*

her state of being immaculate will transform the abyss that is swallowing me, in a life that no longer dies. □

*“Queen of my heart,
how much you cried down here
to attract me to you!
Carefully meditating your life in the Gospel,
I dare to look at you and approach you.
It is not difficult for me to believe
that I am one of your daughters,
because I see you as mortal
and suffering like me...
You appear to me, Mary, at the summit
of Mount Calvary,
standing by the cross, like a priest
on the altar;
offering, to appease the Father’s justice,
the sweet Emanuel, your beloved Jesus.
Desolate Mother, a prophet said it:
There is no pain, similar to your pain!
Oh Queen of martyrs, remaining abandoned,
you pour out all the blood
of your heart for us!
I will soon listen
to the sweet celestial harmony:
I will soon come to see you in heaven!
You smiled at me in the morning of life,
come to smile at me again, Mother,
because evening is descending!
I no longer fear the splendour
of your supreme glory:
I have suffered with you
and I still want to sing on your knees,
Mary, because I love you
and I want to always repeat
that I am your daughter!”*

Saint Therese of the Infant Jesus

Following in the footsteps of Our Lady

It sometimes seems as though sin grips us in a siege and that evil prospers undisturbed everywhere. Humanity appears to be suffocated by disorder, illnesses, despair... We know that all of this is the bitter consequence of man’s original sin, of his rebellion against the Creator, which unfortunately often touches us up close. We ask ourselves what we can do to be witnesses of a new life in Jesus Christ, victorious over death and sin.

God’s greatest desire is for us to return to Him, to harmony with He who preceded original sin. This can only come about through a gradual pathway of renunciation to ourselves, of sacrifice, real communion that makes us pure, or better, purified, renewed, and reintegrated in the divine grace that is life. In a word, it makes us God’s immaculate children (cfr. Phil 2, 15).

The pathway towards an “immaculate” state necessarily passes through the offering of life, which is the culmination of our love for God, and also the obligatory passage towards the resurrection. By renouncing to avail of ourselves in order to leave all interior space to God, we allow Him to live, think, act in us and through us. And so we purify ourselves, transforming ourselves into new creatures, capable of overcoming logic and the structures that the world imposes on us or that we ourselves build for ourselves and that influence us.

This allows us to live “immaculately”, capable of elevating our gaze and it opens us up to new points of view from which to observe reality. And so our interior life becomes acute because it is

purified, rendered immaculate by God’s gaze which scrutinizes us and knows us (cfr. Psalm 139).

The condition of being immaculate does not make us into “supermen”. We remain weak and in need of grace. Nevertheless, united with God and given to Him with purity, we can conquer our inclination towards sin and rebellion more easily and if we make mistakes, we manage to love ourselves and look at ourselves with mercy.

In his goodness, God gives us a gift of the Blessed Virgin Mary, our Immaculate Mother, the only creature to be immaculate from the time of conception. She offers herself for us and with us, and she opens up the road for us to become a new humanity on a pathway towards the state of fullness in God.

M.A.

Devotion to the Immaculate Heart of Mary

To understand devotion to the Immaculate Heart of Mary a brief indication here may suffice. In the language of the Bible, “Heart” means the centre of human existence, the convergence of reason, will, temperament and sensitivity, in which the person finds his unity and his interior direction. According to Mt 5,8, the “immaculate heart” is a heart that, beginning from God, reached a perfect interior unity and therefore “sees God”. “Devotion” to the Immaculate Heart of Mary is therefore approaching this behaviour of the heart, in which the *fiat* – “thy will be done” – becomes the informing core of the whole of existence.

“My Immaculate Heart will triumph”. This is a keyword of the “secret of Fatima” which

has rightly become famous. **What does this mean?** The Heart open to God, purified by the contemplation of God is the strongest of guns and weapons of all kinds. Mary’s *fiat*, the word of her heart, changed the history of the world, because it introduced the Saviour to this world – because thanks to this “Yes”, God was able to become a man in our space and he remains such now and forever. The devil has power in this world, we see it and experience it continuously, and he has power, because our freedom constantly allows itself to be deterred from God.

But since God himself has a human heart and has therefore turned man’s freedom towards good, towards God, freedom for evil no longer has the last word. Since that time, these words are valid: “In the world you will have tribulation, but be in good cheer; I have overcome the world” (John 16, 33). The message of Fatima invites us to trust in this promise.

Joseph Ratzinger +

(from: *A theological comment to the message of Fatima*)

“And so although he existed in the form of a God, the Son of God lowered the heavens and descended to his servants... fulfilling the newest thing of all, the only thing that was truly new underneath the sun, through which God’s infinite power was actually manifested...”

God wants to rest in us, he wants to renew nature also through our conversion, he wants to make us participants in his divinity.”

(B. XVI, general audience 6th May 2009)

God's Face

When the Father asked the Son to come to earth *to make all things new*, he said: I am about to entrust you with a difficult duty, it is true, but I am offering you a valid form of help: you will see my presence everywhere, you will see my likeness, my Face in the whole of creation. In this way I will be with you in the mission that I am about to entrust you with. And so, the Son, who fully shared the Father's wish, came to earth and transformed it, according to the Father's will, and he made it all new and beautiful. And then, as though by enchantment, *the wisdom of the Lord filled the whole earth* and a marvellous transformation came about, which was such that *the wolf also shall dwell with the lamb, the leopard shall lie down with the young goat, the calf and the young lion and the fatling together; And a little child shall lead them. The cow and the bear shall graze; Their young ones shall lie down together; And the lion shall eat straw like the ox, the nursing child shall play by the cobra's hole* (Is 11, 5) and men will be given the ability to do good, unlike before.

Then the people discovered God's love throughout the whole of creation, that they now saw with new eyes and with a sense of surprise, they recognised his face in others and in creation. They understood the beauty of the universe that they saw as God's work, as a marvellous gift of his love, a gift to be welcomed and valued and to be exchanged reciprocally. Then to his friends who asked for explanations for this all new beauty, the Son unveiled this secret saying: I loved the people and the things created not for themselves, but because I could see in them the Face of the Father, because in them I loved the Father. And so loving the Father in them, I loved them with an immense love, the same love as that which links me to the Father. It was this love that made all things new, nothing else. Then he added: you too will be able to do as much; you too will be able to contribute with Me to making all things new, if you perceive the Face of the Father in others and in creation. Only in this manner will your trials not be in vain, only in this way *you will not take the evil received into account*. Only in this way you will not be slaves of the idols that offer

you freedom, as they always take something away, until such time as also taking your lives away.

And so Jesus, we ask you to always give us new eyes, capable of seeing the face of the Father in people and in creation. Actually, we ask you to give us your eyes to see the Father and all things as you see them.

Bethlehem is in joy

How beautiful Bethlehem is today! It is different. It seems to express a great joy. Certainly it is the joy of God for his return to earth thanks to a young Woman. Her joy is endless, so much so that you can perceive it everywhere, even beyond Bethlehem.

God rejoices for the small and humble Woman who was fully available for his coming and so he elected her as Mother, making her joy complete. Yes, the Child, who became a Mother, allows her Lord to fulfil the "dream": that of returning to earth to remain with men, to share life with them, after his distance due to the ancient refusal. God waited for this moment for so long because he always wanted to return to earth from the time man refused him, from the time man preferred to refuse the terrestrial paradise, that paradise that the presence of God had just brought about on earth.

Now the womb of a young Woman brought him back among us and he rests as a Child in a manger, within a stable, made beautiful by the presence of the Son and the Mother. But let us not be sad if the Son was "forced" to be born in a stable. He is certainly very happy to be in a stable as long as he can live with us. Let us be sad rather if our hearts no longer welcome him, if they refuse to meet Him, who is God, who came here especially to be with us.

His love for man will never abandon him, not even during the most difficult moments, not even on the cross, to the extent that he says: "I am thirsty", not for water, but rather, for friendship from man...

The Child who comes during this Christmas will perhaps recall us of this: God's constant desire to remain with us, to share his joy with us. And so, let us not be indifferent to his coming, let us be ready to welcome him. May the Mother, who rejoices with the Son and with us, help us to always readily welcome the Child, whenever He comes.

We can give heaven

"We cannot meet Jesus to come to know him, love him, imitate him, without a real, constant, obstinate appeal to the gospel; without this appeal being intimately part of our life; and so every little action is an immense event in which we are given paradise, in which we must give paradise. It doesn't matter what we must do: hold a sweeping brush in our hands or a calligraphy pen. Speak or remain in silence, mend or hold a conference, take care of an ill person or type on a typewriter. All of this is not the rind of splendid reality, the meeting of the soul with God that is renewed every minute, that grows in grace every minute, more and more beautiful for its God.

Seek the roots of the Gospel amidst the needy: what I propose is the lessening of suffering and an increase of happiness. It is a question of approaching the people who were "skinned alive" and so suffer only by touching them, people who must be met with sweetness. But what is sweetness? It is what manages to touch without wounding, accompanied by joy. This is that paradise that is received in prayer and given as a gift during the meeting.

We are not asked to be strong during moments of suffering. The wheat is not asked to be strong when it is being ground, but to allow the grindstone of the mill to make flour of it".

Madeleine Debrel (1904-1964)

The Message to Mirjana

on the 2nd of October 2009:

"Dear children, as I am looking at you, my heart is gripped with pain. Where are you going, my children? Are you so immersed in sin that you cannot stop? You justify yourselves with sin and you live according to it.

Kneel down under the cross and look at my Son. He conquered sin and he died so that you, my children, might live. Let me help you so that you might not die, but that you might live with my Son forever. Thank you!"

Perhaps our collective "step" is so quick that it seems impossible to stop, so much so that Mary is forced to ask us: *Where are you going, my children? ...do you not know how to stop?* It would be honest to answer her truthfully: "No, Mother, we cannot stop, because this crazy journey that involves insane humanity is automatically moving our steps and we are no longer aware of where we are being brought..."

What a tragedy! This is true sin: man created in God's image, provided with intelligence and a spirit capable of giving him the gift of Divine Knowledge, is no longer the master of himself and is no longer capable of controlling the obscure forces that move him. Sin blinds us and in addition to this, we take it as our defender: *you justify yourselves with sin*, comments Mary, *tight* in her mantle of *Our Lady of Sorrow*. And so, while sin makes us slaves, we continue to run towards a gulf of alienation, of death.

But there is a place, a resting point where Mary offers us an appointment. She is already there, standing upright, she's been there for two thousand years; and she's keeping watch. From beneath Jesus' cross, Mary looks at us and proposes that *we look at her Son*: a game of gazes that saves us, that creates links of communion that evil cannot break into because pure love flows, the Spirit flows, which is only life, *life forever*.

Let us ask our pride to *bend its knees*. It is the only way to stop. Only in this way will we finally be able to open our eyes and understand where we are really going.

S.C.

Liturgy suggests...

Our immaculate offering makes the Word topical

The Order of the Readings for the Mass invites the faithful to give an effective answer to the Word listened to, not only with prayer, but also with the "offering of ourselves". This expression recalls the words of Mary and her total availability for God's plan: "*Behold, I am the handmaid of the Lord, let it be done onto me according to his will*" (Luke 1, 38). This fundamental spiritual disposition, which is to be stimulated during the liturgy of the word, explodes in fullness during the second part of the Mass – the Eucharistic liturgy – and precisely in the Eucharistic Prayer, of which the offering is one of the main elements: "...the Church, and that gathered during that moment and in that place in particular, offers the Father the immaculate victim in the Holy Spirit. **The Church wants the faithful not only to offer the immaculate victim, but it also wants them to learn to offer themselves**" (Principles and Regulations for the use of the Roman Missal 55f). In the Eucharist, all the potential of the word of God, proclaimed in the first part of the Mass, thus reaches the fullness of realisation. As a consequence, the answer to the Word also reaches the utmost expression.

(Taken from: *Il rito della Messa* – d. Ferdinando Cappelletti)

Reflections of light from Mary's land

by Stefania Consoli

Approved at all costs

Medjugorje criticised? Just as well! Medjugorje attacked and misunderstood? Blessed be God! Medjugorje the object of slander and gossip, that everyone's talking about? Thank Heavens!

Anyone who believes that such an important and decisive event can have an easy life, applause and human consent, is probably deluded, and in any case, they haven't given due consideration to the pathway traced out by Jesus, who chose to be a stumbling block, who lived to die on the cross, to be a source of scandal for the pagans and foolishness for the Judeans; who proposed his persecution to his own, dishonour for Peter himself, the head of the apostles... Yet this is all that counts for Christ's disciples. Certainly not as a cause of suffering as an end to itself, obviously, but as the only way of salvation, of resurrection.

And so why should people be so bothered about hearsay? Why should they be so agitated if they are misunderstood, or worse, vilified? Why should we want the *reality of Medjugorje* to be recognised at all costs, to feel alright, instead of worrying about being *recognised* by God like those who really follow the pathway of his Son, *insulted* per excellence, but also only and last Truth?

Many, too many compromises occupy a place in the hearts and the habits of those who welcomed the presence of Mary in Medjugorje: just to be accepted, people agree to remain in silence, to don a mask, to restrict to bland devotions something that should be a passionate and radical journey to the school of the Queen of Peace; who is tender but also unmoving in her requests for absolute conversion, without half measures.

On one hand we are attracted by the promises of the Heavens, on the other hand we would like them to be offered to us on a silver platter! We need to decide. The pathway proposed by the Virgin is another one. She is not the "celestial mummy" who wants us to remain children, willing to go to Medjugorje only to *suck* sweets and feel well; only to experience extraordinary feelings to tell to colleagues and friends about upon our return, or to be part of a *movement* that makes us feel less alone. Mary came to put an end to any arrangement that manipulates grace for human interests, for little benefits of power, for affirmation over others, and even for financial profits...

Do the press, the mass media spread unfavourable assessments? Then in order to have an easy life, we hold them out with extreme ease as scapegoats so that they might be lapidated: "...it would be good if one man died for the people..." (cf. John 18,14), in the hope that once the spotlight is turned off on the victim of the moment, everyone might return to being quiet like before and then we could recommence being good with our little *Mummy*.

Mature children, who are grown up and tempered by trials and ready to face the battle with Her against the shadows of Evil that press down on humanity - this is who Mary is calling. People willing to allow themselves

to be changed fully in their way of doing things, in their mentality, to undertake the style of Christ, the immolated Lamb who offers himself unconditionally (and without compromise) to the Father, passing through the hands of his persecutors. His body will be destroyed, they will try to cancel out his memory, but nothing and nobody will be able to silence the Truth that has been continuously rising up for centuries and that is affirmed on the lies of the Evil one.

And so we too, Mary's "dear children". Let us not worry about men, about what they might say, about their approvals, their threats, and possible condemnations. The grace of these times is very quick and it is easily brought about in the plans that God established in an irreversible manner. It does not allow for delays or rethinks. It is up to us to get in line, to also enjoy the joy of the threshold. Let us not risk being left behind.

The history of salvation is still being made, and the grace that God grants us to bring it to fulfilment is always new: "I fill up in my flesh what is still lacking in regard to Christ's afflictions, for the sake of his body, which is the church", Saint Paul wrote (Col 1, 24). And so, why should we lazily sit down and settle for little religious *gratifications*, rather than generously answering he who calls us: *Here I am Lord, send me!*

The need to pray

Those returning from Medjugorje usually bring a desire with them that the grace of *that place* transformed into a veritable urgency: to pray! During the time spent in church reciting the rosary with many others, or in silence on apparition hill, or climbing up the Mountain that has the stations of the cross, pilgrims enter a dimension that envelops them and attracts them into the depths of their soul; a dimension in which they feel good because God is present, a dimension in which *the bite of everyday life* tends to disappear to make space for a calm that is given, that has the silent taste of paradise. And as the spirit dilates, the mind opens up to comprehend the reality of the heavens effortlessly, as though it were seeing images flowing on the screen, while the heart, like a film, records the visions and encloses them within itself.

This is man at prayer. This is the man who allows himself to be gripped by the invisible grip that positions him on a level from which it is easy to listen to God's voice, in which it is normal to consider angels, archangels, the saints of the heavens nearby, with whom to speak in confident intimacy.

Pray, pray, pray... Mary tells us. Because she knows what it means to be experiencing the simple reality of every day, to be immersed in this state of grace that is capable

of transfiguring every instant, even the more unpleasant ones, that therefore remain in their place without capturing our attention too much, and our time. *Pray!* She asks us. And we obediently pray. Yes, but what is prayer "according to Mary"?

As we were saying, in Medjugorje we are almost *dragged* by a flow of prayer that has been flowing for 28 years uninterrupted through the souls and the lips of millions of pilgrims; upon returning home however, the initial fervour risks weakening if it is not fuelled and guarded. Our instinct then leads us to "form a pack", to seek other people with whom to share the need to *immerse ourselves* in God. Or better, more than the natural instinct, it is the Holy Spirit - the purest principle of communion - that directs us towards others to make a Church. Many people therefore, throughout the world, the **PRAYER GROUPS** that have formed naturally to meet the needs of those who, upon returning from Medjugorje, wanted to continue to pray in the name of the Queen of Peace.

It is impossible to attempt to define common traits, given the variety and the number; we know the source of inspiration but not how it is interpreted. The intention is certainly always good and praiseworthy; but it is a good idea to ask ourselves one question: how do people pray in these groups? Perhaps many would reply saying *what* do they pray. But it's not the same...

"I went to a church where, every Friday evening, there is a meeting of a "Medjugorje group", says Federica. "The church was full to the brim. Many young people with musical instruments were animating the hymns in a very involving manner. But then, when the rosary was prayed...it was all so fast! The

Hail Marys were prayed so quickly, one after the other, almost in a hail. I couldn't keep up...I felt anxious, and above all, I began to ask myself: how can we experience prayer in this manner? Not even a moment of silence to enter into ourselves and contemplate God... What is the meaning of all this *hurry*? Obviously I am grateful to these young people who are personally committed to serving all of us, but this way of praying only gives rise to emotions, it arouses affectivity, but it does not facilitate our meeting with God in the

Spirit. I spent two pleasant hours...I prayed, yes, but I did not come out of the church feeling transformed!"

Pray, pray, pray... The desire is there. Good will also. Actually, we feel the *need*. And so, let's ask Mary to pray in us with her simple and deep style: She who dwells in the Trinity knows the pathway for entering into God's heart; actually even the shortcuts! Let's allow ourselves to be guided like children, with simplicity, without overdoing it. Perhaps the churches won't be so *packed*, but the prayer will certainly be elevated up to the Heavens. □



Who is the Pope speaking to?

I wasn't expecting a Pope like this! Always kind, smiling and almost shy, who gives the impression of great fragility and on the other hand, when you least expect it, during certain important occasions, he shows rare courage and moral stature. He leaves the pompous language of men of the Church aside and speaks clearly.

The poor man! Perhaps he too, having swallowed one too many bitter pills, loses his patience and, as they say, "he gets a few things off of his sacred chest".

What is happening in the Church? Here we need a decisive turnaround, that is called "conversion" in biblical language; a word that is not pleasing in the eyes of man in general and the world.

Perhaps it is for this reason, due to the fact that in Medjugorje Our Lady always asks us above all for conversion, that **Medjugorje causes a sense of true joy** in our pastors, which is shared by many priests and lay men and women who are involved and illuminated?

The zealotry that many pastors put into **fighting the "danger"** of Medjugorje is quite singular, as though there were no other more serious dangers...No "danger" can never come from She who invites people to prayer, to nourish themselves on the word of God, to frequent the sacraments of confession and the Eucharist; from She who does not say anything different with respect to the Virgin of Lourdes and Fatima: prayer and penance. And if her presence among us is so extended, it is not due to an unusual talkativeness on the part of the Mother of the Lord, but because the time is serious and the material and spiritual suffering of her children is great.

Nor can we **detach the person of Mary from the site chosen for her to show herself; because grace follows the logic of Incarnation:** it becomes concrete and active in the time and space that God wants and that the Holy Spirit desires. Nor is it right to entrench ourselves behind the fact that the Church has not yet expressed itself. This state of waiting for the expression on the part of the Church does not legitimise more severity and restrictions than the Holy See, with cases of veritable free judgement.

Why are the groups of Medjugorje forced to ask the mayors for the use of stadiums to pray instead of asking priests for the use of churches? Why can everyone talk about everything, but the visionaries cannot bear witness and they are hunted out of the Dioceses like the plague?

The people of Medjugorje (now 20 million pilgrims) do not want any privileges, they want the same rights as the other faithful and if there are things that need to be clarified, it is about time that someone engaged in a first and serious discernment of the facts and the fruits of Medjugorje; without the fear of dirtying their hands or ruining their career. Sometimes sins of omission and "Pilate style" solutions are more serious than many other sins.

When reflecting on this, I found the answer to my question: who is the Pope speaking to? On the 12th of September last, when the Pope ordained some new bishops, he gave them some of paternal advice, especially to be faithful, prudent and good. Let's underline a few passages and each of us will then try to draw the dutiful conclusions.

"Like the 72 disciples sent by the Lord, the presbyter must be someone who brings healing, who helps to heal man's inner wound, his distance from God". On another occasion, the Pope explained well that the word episcop-bishop means one who supervises for the good of those who are entrusted to him; not a policeman or a prison guard.

The Pope continues: "Let us not link men to us, let us not seek power, prestige, esteem for ourselves. Let us lead men towards Christ and so, towards the living God".

"In a civil society and, not rarely, also in the Church, many of those to whom a responsibility was entrusted, work for themselves and not for the community".

"Prudence is something different from astuteness. It demands humble, disciplined and vigilant reasoning, that is not blinded by prejudice, but that seeks truth, however uncomfortable".

"Only if our life unfolds in a dialogue with Jesus Christ, if his characteristics enter us and mould us, can we become truly good servants".

Let us be grateful to the Holy Father for this useful reflection and also for the Year of Priests called by him, which gives us the possibility of praying more intensely for our pastors and entrusting them to the Virgin Mary.

Don Nicolino Mori

The sound of silence

It's nighttime. In a silence where everything is quite, even the birds are united in their restorative sleep with this silence that is not a silence, but rather, the perception of a sound that is just about apparent and that is released from the depths of the soul, which vibrates at the thought that this sound might be perceived by He who generated you. And so the heart is warmed with a heat that is pure abandonment, and then it starts beating crazily...and you try to *compress it out of fear* that it might burst, that it might jump out of your body to unite itself with the Lord's palpitating heart.

But *we cannot command the heart...*and so, in this profound communion in his Holy Spirit, God – for whom nothing is impossible – through us, can once again create, generate, give life, enter hearts where there is no hope and love to recreate peace and bring them back to their original balance.

All of this is possible through our union in God with the offering of our life. But not alone. Let's think of how great it is to be *a single heart and a single soul* with the brothers and sisters that God places alongside us! The offering of life in communion is a prayer of extraordinary power... It is sufficient to offer him our determined, sincere, yes. God will use it.

Andrea Casadei

The Medjugorje Effect

It's strange to be talking about an effect, yet I cannot find a better term to summarise my *post Medjugorje*.

It's been almost two months since my trip and luckily, as I had already been told by some friends and as I myself feel, I brought a piece of my Medjugorje home with me.

Something has changed, daily life is still full of thousands of problems and things to do, but there is a time in the evening when I rediscover my Medjugorje, where I manage to once again breathe in the peace that I found amidst *those* mountains. After supper we start to get organised to go to bed, I shout: "Marco, move it!, "Fabio, take Luca!" in total chaos we change nappies, brush teeth, then go to the toilet, put on pyjamas and when we're ready, we all get into the big bed together. Until some time ago we had turned on the television or I would have read the children a fairytale, but now we all make the sign of the cross together and we start praying, isn't it funny? After seven years of marriage I find myself praying the rosary with my husband...before it would never even have crossed our minds to pray the rosary...then together, not a hope...!!!

I recite the *Hail Mary* and Fabio and Marco answer me, while little Luca sucks on his pacifier and listens to us in peace and silence as though he were transported by the grace that descends on our bedroom at that moment; precisely between the twentieth and the thirtieth Hail Mary, I start to get no more replies: Marco is the first to doze off, then Fabio and then Luca, while I finish my prayers.

During one of those many evenings I asked myself at a certain point: The TV? Shocking...it has always been turned off, because over the last few years we had always been accompanied by this electrical household appliance that relentlessly continued to speak and perhaps sometimes not only kept you company, but even monopolised the entire evening. Now I listen to my children laughing, crying, acting up and I also listen to the silence, discovering that sometimes it says more to you than a blaring TV set.

This is it, this is the Medjugorje that I brought home with me and that I will try to keep with prayer and commitment, knowing that I will be rewarded by peace and communion with my family and with God.

Cinzia Vinchi

Rejoice Mary!

To understand *the* mystery that surpasses all knowledge, the Virgin says to the Servant of God: "Tell me how is it possible for me to give birth to a son, when I have no knowledge of man?" Full of respect, the angel acclaims:

Rejoice, Thou through whom joy will shine forth:

Rejoice, Thou through whom the curse will cease!

Rejoice, recall of fallen Adam:

Rejoice, redemption of the tears of Eve!

Rejoice, height inaccessible to human thoughts:

Rejoice, depth un-discernible even for the eyes of angels!

Rejoice, for Thou art the throne of the King:

Rejoice, for Thou bearest Him Who beareth all!

Rejoice, star that causeth the Sun to appear:

Rejoice, womb of the Divine Incarnation!

Rejoice, Thou through whom creation is renewed:

Rejoice, Thou through whom we worship the Creator!

Rejoice, O Bride Unwedded!

The power of the Most High rests on the Unwedded and like a Garden with beautiful fruit, she brings Salvation to all those who want to welcome it.

Akathist Hymn to the Mother of God attributed to Romanos the Melodist (+560)

OUR READERS WRITE

We are grateful to you!

Like a family

Father Franco Loddo from Contratación (Guadalupe): "Brothers and Sisters in Christ, for some time now I have not received your precious publication in Spanish entitled "María Reina de la Paz", and I miss it... I have followed the religious phenomenon of Medjugorje since the beginning, according to the opinion of the Holy Father John Paul II, this phenomenon is the continuation of Lourdes and Fatima.

Each time I receive your news I also use it to keep our dear ill brothers and sisters of this lazaretto in good spirits, in which we Salesians have been working for more than a century. Faith in Our Lady, entitled "Auxiliadora del Cristianos", is so deeply embedded in the population of our dear lepers that a monument has been erected on the mountain that dominates our valley. Every Saturday I go up there, to an altitude of 1,850 metres, despite my 80 years, to celebrate the Holy Mass at eight in the morning.

I know that you need help, also of a financial nature to continue with your precious publication; and for this reason I will write to my brother in Italy to tell him to send you something on my behalf. I am united with you in prayer".

Sister M. Franca from South Africa: "I truly want to read Echo, it gives me so much strength. I was in Medjugorje twice and it gave me such a feeling of joy that I want to share with everyone, together with the desire to pray and encourage others to pray. I distribute Echo in English and those who receive it are happy. May the Lord reward you for all the good that you do.

Aida Ramos from San Sebastian (Porto Rico): "Please accept my warmest greetings. As always, I am enclosing a cheque as a contribution to Echo, which makes us so happy and fuels our spirituality.

Ghislaine Bouchet from France: "Thanking you for this precious spiritual nourishment, I assure you my fraternal nearness".

Geneviève Gamel from France: "Dear friends, thank you for the Echo of Mary which supports me on this journey towards God which is sometimes a little arduous. We remain yours in a union of prayer and hope".

Berti M. De Castello from Porto Rico: "Thank you for the great work that you do. I lost contact with you for some time and I missed your magazine a lot. Along with my address, I am also sending you a little donation. I have a little collection of the previous issues of Echo because we use them in our prayer group".

Sister Margaret Mary Onyema from Nigeria: "With my heart brimming with joy I would like to thank you for the constancy and faith with which you send me your bi-monthly magazine. I pray to the Lord to send you men and women with a generous heart to finance your publication.

Thank you for the opportunity that you give me to spread devotion to Mary through your publication. Queen of peace, pray for us!".

Antonella Andreis from Vicenza (Italy): "Thank you for giving me back the joy of reading you, especially in the back issues, which I was no longer able to find in the local churches".

First of all for the goodness with which you have welcomed Echo into your homes, but also for the faithfulness that moves you to ask for it or seek it out, when, for some reason or other, it is delayed or doesn't arrive.

We are grateful to you for the trust that you place in us and our way of *transmitting Mary*, her words, her thoughts, and her messages...

And **we are grateful** to those who express their pleasure and their desire to continue reading Echo, through letters, telephone calls, e-mails... The Secretariat, which receives contacts from **many voices**, tells us:

"Hello, is that the Secretariat of Echo of Mary?..."

Astounded voices: "Is Echo still being printed?"... and along with a sense of surprise, the joy of having rediscovered it in a church, along with the desire to receive it again;

Grateful voices: "We are nuns, we've suffered, it was a spiritual sacrifice to no longer have it!";

Needy voices: "We've been touched by the grace of Medjugorje and Echo will help us to experience it on a daily basis, it is a form of spiritual nourishment that is often missing in parishes: continue, because we need Echo!";

Confused voices: "What's happening in Medjugorje, we've been hearing a lot of negative things...are you continuing?".

To all these voices and to many others who silently express their nearness in prayer or in a more concrete manner by donations in cash (which help us more than ever to continue), we say THANK YOU! Yes, thank you from the heart, **because without you, Echo cannot survive**, it cannot continue to *echo* what Mary says to us, what she exhorts and calls us to do in Medjugorje...

We are grateful to you, therefore, readers and distributors, for all of this; but also for the patience that you've shown during this year that is about to come to an end, in which we've had to deal with countless challenges, enormous difficulties of all kinds. Things did not always go our way....

We continue to believe that Echo is a spiritual reality generated by Mary, to reach thousands of faithful throughout the world who say that they are happy to receive "mail" from her. And for this reason, Echo cannot have an easy life! The Age-Old Enemy is attempting to block the Virgin's plans, we experience this continuously: he wants to cause us to waste time by creating unexpected events and difficulties that cause annoying delays or useless hindrances. If we didn't hand ourselves over to God continuously so that He might guide our commitment towards a good result, it would be impossible to continue! But we believe and we hope, and so we dare.... And so: *Deo gratias!*

The Editorial Staff

Echo fully relies on readers' donations.

To all who have been instruments of Providence for Echo, enabling us to continue to help Mary reach her children, goes our heartfelt thanks, whom we remember especially in prayer and at Holy Mass.

If you desire a written response for your donation, please kindly request it. May God reward you and your loved ones onehundredfold!

Echo creates what is like a family that is mostly made up of you readers, there are so many of you and you live in many regions, of all continents. We know that there are lots of you because we have many requests for this great little magazine, for each issue we print some hundreds of thousands of copies, in many languages.

Now Echo addresses you, like family members, and it speaks to you as though it were speaking within the family. Echo is pleased to reach your homes because it knows that you keep it well. Yes, because Echo needs to be kept within a family: our Echo; we say kept spiritually, with your prayers and your love, otherwise it cannot live because Echo is made of things of the Spirit. Moreover, Echo needs strong legs to reach you, because you also live far away, thousands of kilometres away, and you need an efficient service. Yes, Echo needs means and resources that are adequate for printing, packaging and distribution. Now the equipment that manages the newspaper is no longer able to fulfil its role in an efficient manner and it must be replaced.

For this reason Echo is asking you for help, knowing that it can count on you. And so thank you! With your support, Echo will still have the possibility of keeping our family alive for the joy of many perhaps, and also of the Mother, whom we believe to be the inspirer and custodian of this little magazine.

Pietro Squassabia

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May the virginal silence of Mary be our home, in which we rest quietly to wait for the Lord's Advent. Like a mother who is opened up intimately welcomes the creature, may our spirit be attentive to the grace that descends to fertilize and generate the Son of God among us once again, in our yes, in our desire to be the flesh of the Emmanuel...

HAPPY ADVENT and MERRY CHRISTMAS to everyone!

Villanova M., 1st november 2009